

FAIRFAX COUNTY, VIRGINIA MEMORANDUM

TO: Senior Management Team **DATE:** February 12, 2003

FROM: Anthony H. Griffin
County Executive

SUBJECT: Declaration on Air Quality Leadership

Fairfax County and the Washington metropolitan region face a difficult and complex problem regarding our air quality. Not only has the region been classified as a severe non-attainment area based on the one-hour ozone standard stipulated in the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, but our poor air quality also threatens the health and well-being of everyone living and working in the region. The condition of our air makes it more likely that we will develop or aggravate respiratory and other health problems. In addition to these public health consequences, failure to adequately address our air quality problems will likely result in sanctions being imposed on our region. These sanctions would jeopardize the expansion of the region's highway and mass transit systems and would adversely affect the economic well being of our region and the Commonwealth. All of us would feel the impacts of dirtier air, more congestion and declining economic conditions.

The elected leadership of the region is working to fashion proposals to improve air quality. These proposals will require action by Fairfax County Government, not only in our role as the government responsible for implementing public programs to reduce air pollution in the largest jurisdiction in the region but also as a large corporate entity whose actions, like those of other large organizations, will impact improvements in air quality. These are responsibilities that we must take very seriously.

The Fairfax County Government will continue to take a leadership role in improving air quality. While our actions must be done in conjunction with the regional efforts being undertaken by the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee and the Transportation Planning Board, our stewardship must also show the way for others to follow. This means that each agency director must consider and choose the actions he or she can take to improve the air quality within the County and that are consistent with and supportive of regional efforts. It also means that we will all have to take responsibility for following, and urging others to follow, recommended actions for improving air quality. Some of these actions will apply only on days, usually during the summer ozone season, May through September, when our air quality is more likely to violate federal standards. Others will result in permanent changes in how we do business.

For example, we must strongly favor lower-emissions vehicles in our fleet replacements. We must continue to promote alternatives to the single occupant automobile to our employees and customers, such as teleworking, transit, ridesharing and walking. Further, we must evaluate restrictions on certain types of activities, and take other appropriate measures to ensure that we will meet all applicable standards. Any failure to follow these recommended actions is a serious breach of our responsibility.

In order to address this important goal of improving air quality within Fairfax County and the region, over the months and years ahead, we will be promulgating best practices that will affect every part of Fairfax County Government. We must set an example of good corporate citizenship for other local governments and for private organizations. Our personal and organizational commitments and support are critical to achieve the highest possible air quality.

I look forward to working with you, County employees, the Board of Supervisors, boards and commissions and citizens to fully meet the challenges to improve our air quality.

AHG:RAS:gm